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RB 902

Public Hearing: 2-20-09

TO: MEMBERS OF THE PROGRAM REVIEW AND INVESTIGATIONS
AND TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEES

FROM: METRO TAXI

DATE: FEBRUARY 20, 2009

RE: TESTIMONY REGARDING RB 902 - AN ACT IMPLEMENTING
THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM
REVIEW AND INVESTIGATIONS COMMITTEE CONCERNING
THE SAFETY OF TAXICABS AND LIVERY VEHICLES

Metro Taxi supports in part and opposes in part RB 902, and respectfully contends that the bill should be passed with amendments to certain sections and the removal of others.

Metro Taxi, Inc. is the states largest taxicab company operating in the greater New Haven and Bridgeport areas. We run 160 cabs and contract with almost 200 drivers and employ nearly 50 support staff. We are committed to providing the public with fast efficient taxicab service 24 hours a day seven days a week.

Section 1.

The annual fee imposed in section one is a large annual expenditure that may be difficult to add on to the numerous other costs associated with meeting the standards set forth in the current regulations, but if the revenue gained by such a fee were used to further regulate and promote the safety of taxis Metro Taxi would not oppose its imposition.

The increase to the daily fine that can be imposed on a person who violates the regulations associated with operating taxicabs would probably be overly burdensome in some instances where the violation is a small one. Metro Taxi feels it is also important that the fine be levied against the person responsible for the violation, such as the driver if the violation is not displaying his license, or some other violation not under the control of the certificate holder. In addition, a system to track driver violations would help taxi companies make more informed decisions when hiring drivers. Currently there is no way to know if an applicant was fired from another company for violations of regulations.

The language disallowing applications for a year after a decision against a holder may be acceptable to Metro Taxi, however there should be clarification that hearings should not be held up because of unsubstantiated or malicious complaints filed by competing companies or those acting on their behalf.

Section 2.

The increased inspections contemplated in section 2 are acceptable to Metro Taxi, although for large fleets additional time should be given for their completion, and should be due on September 1st instead of March 1st, as that date means taxis must be taken off the road for inspection at the busiest time of the year. A September date would allow for those inspections to take place during the slower time of the year for the taxi business.

Section 4.

Metro Taxi strongly opposes the disallowing of taxicab companies to self-insure. This allowance has saved the companies that utilize it funds which are able to be redirected to improving service to the riding public. In addition, self insuring allows for a much larger (5 times as great) amount of coverage, allowing for greater ability to meet financial responsibilities in the insurance arena.

Section 6.

Metro Taxi strongly supports the additional staff called for in this section, but realizes the reality of the current budget situation in the state and feels that this addition if entertained should be directly tied to the increase in fees outlined in section 1.